HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Some species are making a comeback.

With knowledge, ceremony, and science, our waters can thrive again.

The waters need to be better protected if we are to protect the whole food chain.

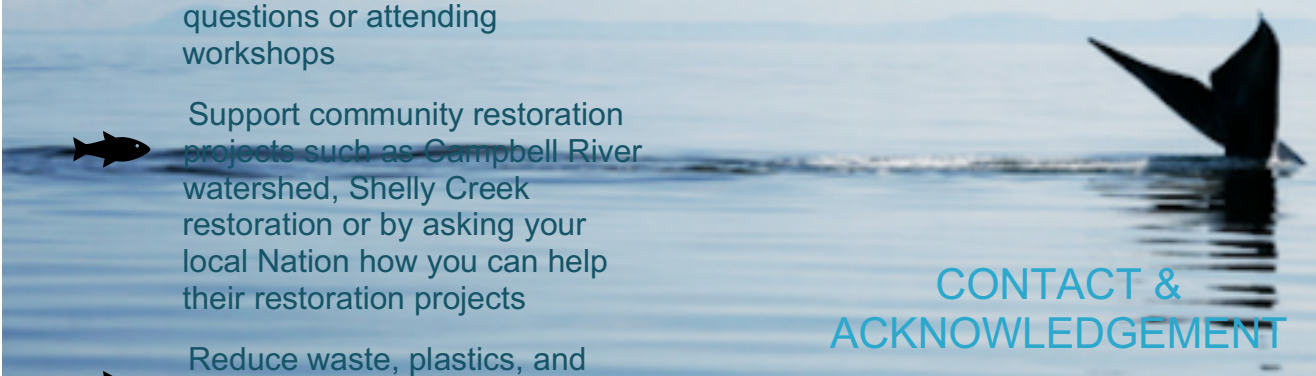
CALL TO ACTION

- Learn from Elders about traditional harvesting by asking questions or attending workshops
- Support community restoration projects such as Campbell River watershed, Shelly Creek restoration or by asking your local Nation how you can help their restoration projects
- Reduce waste, plastics, and toxins in waterways by proper recycling and using non-toxic chemicals for cleaning and fertilizing.

Stand With Us to Protect Salmon, Herring, and All Our Relatives in the Sea.

Created to honour our traditions and protect our waters for future generations.

"The salmon are our relatives. When they thrive, we thrive."



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CULTURAL TEACHINGS ARE A CALL TO ACTION

CARING FOR OUR WATERS, HONOURING OUR TRADITIONS

"With proper knowledge and protection, we can have our waters thriving again"

INTRODUCTION

I am Suzanne Van Ryk, a member of the Qualicum First Nation, and I'm hoping for our Nation and sistering Nations to come together to protect the sea.

For countless generations, our people have lived in deep connection with the waters. The ocean and rivers have always provided life, food, and teachings.

This pamphlet shares how our Nation used the waters in the past, the changes we face today, and how we can protect and restore balance for future generations.

CULTURAL TEACHINGS

Animals are seen as relatives, offering themselves so people could live. Hunters prayed, sang, and gave thanks for the harvest. Whales were said to offer themselves, connecting people with the Creator. The Creator is like a shape-shifter, protecting land and seas.

TRADITIONAL USE OF WATERS

Salmon – harvested in the fall when the tide comes in

Oysters and Clams – harvested when the tide goes out

Herring – once abundant, harvested with respect and ceremony

CHANGES OVER TIME

From Abundance to Scarcity

Ancestors harvested only what was needed. Over time, people lost connection with nature and forgot that it already provides everything we need.

Loss of Guidelines

Traditional food sources opened to commercial use and no early regulations → over-harvesting

Herring were heavily taken and not fully used — sold to mink farms instead of valued as food

Ground trawlers still operate in some areas, destroying sea floors and disturbing whole ecosystems

Restoring Balance

⇒ Protect waters
⇒ Reduce toxins and pollution
⇒ Teach youth about respect, ceremony, and sustainability
⇒ Restore habitat: clam gardens, eelgrass beds, and salmon streams

Blend Knowledge + Science

Traditional teachings guide us and new tools like Environmental DNA (eDNA) help us monitor food like salmon, herring, and shellfish; detect invasive species; and support community-led decisions.

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING OF LAND AND SEA IS ESSENTIAL

Encourage First Nation-led monitoring of the sea, combining eDNA testing and traditional trapping to detect and remove invasive species early → protect native ecosystems.

Engage in Coastal Guardianship to watch closely for oil spills, environmental damage, and impacts on sustainability.

Protect whales by removing ghost fishing gear from the waters and disentangling whales when they become trapped.

Closely monitor fishing from land and sea to prevent overfishing, especially where salmon return to spawn.

Re-establish seasonal harvesting rooted in traditional teachings and natural rhythms.

Support community stewardship by involving local guardians and youth.

Restore habitats such as eelgrass beds, clam gardens, and salmon streams as living examples of guidelines in action.

Bring together Nations, researchers, and governments to restore lost knowledge and ensure policies honour traditional practices